

Message Text

PAGE 01 HONG K 10903 310900Z

13

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8579

INFO USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINNHAC HONOLULU HI

CINCUSARPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 10903

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

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SUBJECT: PLA-PARTY CONTROVERSY OVER MILITIA

REF: HONG KONG 9985

SUMMARY. MILITIA WORK CONFERENCE REPORTS FROM SEVERAL PROVINCES, INCLUDING THE ANHWEI BASE OF PLA POLITICAL CHIEF LI TEH-SHENG, HAVE SHOWN A POSSIBLE DIVISION OF VIEW OVER THE REGIME'S SEPTEMBER CALL FOR A PROFESSIONALIZED MILITIA. LI'S ABILITY TO SATISFY BOTH HIS MILITARY COLLEAGUES AND THE PRC'S CIVILIAN LEADERSHIP MAY BE AT ISSUE. END SUMMARY.

1. ANHWEI, CHEKIANG, HUNAN AND SHANTUNG RECENTLY ANNOUNCED PROVINCIAL MEETS HELD TO DISCUSS MILITIA WORK IN THEIR AREAS. THE COINCIDENCE OF THE MEETINGS SUGGESTS A CENTRAL DOCUMENT INSPIRED THEM, AND IN FACT A LOWER-LEVEL SHANSI BROADCAST CONFIRMS THE EXISTENCE OF AN "IMPORTANT DIRECTIVE" ON URBAN MILITIA-BUILDING (OCTOBER 18 BROADCAST). WHEREVER IT ORIGINATED, SUCH A
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 HONG K 10903 310900Z

DIRECTIVE WOULD CERTAINLY BE PASSED DOWN FROM THE PLA'S GENERAL POLITICAL DEPARTMENT HEADED BY PARTY VICE CHAIRMAN LI TEH-SHENG WHO IS ALSO BOSS OF ANHWEI.

2. THE PROVINCIAL REPORTS SUGGEST CHINA COULD BE DIVIDED ON ITS MILITIA POLICY. (A RECENT HONG KONG DLO SOURCE EMPHATICALLY DESCRIBED CHINESE MILITARY LEADERS AS CONFUSED AND DIVIDED ON THE SUBJECT.) JUST THIS SEPTEMBER 29, A PEOPLE'S DAILY-LIBERATION ARMY DAILY JOINT EDITORIAL CALLED FOR A PROFESSIONALIZED MILITIA THAT COULD BE PLACED ON A PAR WITH THE PLA FIELD AND LOCAL FORCES AND "SHOW ITS MIGHT IN WARTIME" (REFTEL). THE EDITORIAL STRESSED THE MILITIA'S NEED TO STRENGTHEN "MILITARY AND POLITICAL TRAINING"--IN THAT ORDER.

3. THE FOUR PROVINCES SPLIT DOWN THE MIDDLE ON HOW TO HANDLE THIS CALL FOR PROFESSIONALIZING THE MILITIA. ANHWEI AND SHANTUNG, PROVINCES RUN BY PLA MEN LI TE-SHENG AND YANG TEH-CHIH RESPECTIVELY, MAKE NO REFERENCE TO THE EDITORIAL OR TO MILITARY TRAINING, NOR TO ARMING THE MILITIA WITH ANYTHING MORE THAN THE "BASIC THEORIES OF MARXISM." INDEED, THEIR CONFERENCES DEALT WITH "POLITICAL WORK," WHICH SHANTUNG'S REPORT BLUNTLY NOTES HAS "STILL FAILED TO KEEP PACE WITH THE THE OBJECTIVE SITUATION" (OCTOBER 22 BROADCAST). SINCE IT IS WELL KNOWN THAT MAO'S PRIORITIES FOR THE MILITIA ARE BUILDING IT "ORGANIZATIONALLY, POLITICALLY, AND MILITARILY" (A PHRASE GIVEN ONLY PASSING REFERENCE IN THE JOINT EDITORIAL), SHANTUNG MAY BE ARGUING THAT PRESENT TALK OF "MILITARY TRAINING" IS PREMATURE THERE.

4. BY CONTRAST, HUNAN AND CHEKIANG--BOTH UNDER CIVILIAN CONTROL--SPOKE STRONGLY OF THE NEED FOR TRAINING AND DID NOT CONFINE THEIR CONFERENCES SOLELY TO "POLITICAL WORK." CHEKIANG ENCOURAGED "EFFORTS" TO " STRENGTHEN BASIC TRAINING" SO THAT MILITIA MEN "WILL BE CAPABLE OF FIGHTING AND WINNING" (OCTOBER 18 BROADCAST). CHEKIANG ALSO INVOKED THE "ADVANCED EXPERIENCE OF SHANGHAI., WHICH HAS BUILT UP AN ARMED MILITIA FORCE UNDER THE PARTY'S DIRECT CONTROL (REFTEL).

5. HUNAN'S REPORT SIMILARLY REFERRED TO "ARMS," TO "MANY FORMS" (PRESUMABLY INCLUDING MILITARY) OF MILITIA TRAINING, AND TO LEARNING FROM THE CIVILIAN-RUN MILITIA IN "PEKING AND SHANGHAI" (OCTOBER 25 BROADCAST). WHILE ALL FOUR PROVINCES USED CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 HONG K 10903 310900Z

PHRASES THAT APPEARED IN THE JOINT EDITORIAL, ONLY HUNAN EXPLICITLY REFERRED TO IT.

6. TIBET, LIKE INNER MONGOLIA (HONG KONG 10570) AND OTHER LIGHTLY POPULATED BORDER REGIONS, IS IN A SPECIAL CATEGORY OF PROVINCES THAT HAVE TRADITIONALLY TAKEN MILITIA-BUILDING SERIOUSLY. ITS MILITIA WORK CONFERENCE REPORT THUS UNDERSTANDABLY MENTIONED "ARMING THE PEASANTS," WHILE THE TIBET DAILY CALLED FOR "PAYING ATTENTION" TO "WEAPONS" (OCTOBER 28 BROADCAST. SIGNIFICANTLY FOR A BORDER AREA, ITS NEWSPAPER ALSO REFLECTED SOME LOCAL DISUNITY OVER MILITIA POLICY WHEN IT WARNED PLA MEN TO REPORT PROMPTLY " INSTRUCTIONS RECEIVED FROM HIGHER MILITARY DEPARTMENTS" TO PARTY OFFICIALS SO THAT

THEY "CAN BE CARRIED OUT" IN A "UNIFIED MANNER." TIBET'S REPORTING, LIKE THAT OF THE OTHER MILITARY CONTROLLED PROVINCES, FAILED TO MENTION THE EDITORIAL.

7. BESIDES THE PROVINCIAL WORK CONFERENCES, WE HAVE NOTED RADIO BROADCASTS ABOUT SUB-PROVINCIAL MILITIA ACTIVITIES IN ANHWEI AND THE PLA-CONTROLLED CITIES OF SHENYANG, TIAYUAN, AND HARBIN. THE REPORTS ARE SIMILAR TO ONES THAT WERE PUBLISHED ON THE WORKERS' MILITIA IN PEKING AND SHANGHAI AT THE TIME OF THE JOINT EDITORIAL. YET ONLY TAIYUAN'S MENTIONS THE EDITORIAL, AND NONE POINT TO PEKING OR SHANGHAI MODELS. THEY ALSO SPEAK OF MILITARY TRAINING, WITH SHENYANG EXTOLLING THE EXTENSIVE TRAINING CARRIED OUT THERE OVER "THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS." HOWEVER, SHENYANG'S STATEMENT SEEMS INTENDED TO ANSWER THE EDITORIAL BY SUGGESTING THAT SHENYANG'S URBAN MILITIA IS ALREADY UPGRADED, AND THEREFORE DOES NOT REQUIRE THE CENTER'S ATTENTION. SHENYANG IS THE CAPITAL CITY OF MANCHURIAN STRONGMAN CHEN HSI-LIEN, A POLITBURO MEMBER.

8. SINCE THE EDITORIAL SEEMED DESTINED TO STRIKE A RAW MILITARY NERVE, IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT IT HAS BEEN RECEIVED UNENTHUSIASTICALLY IN MOST PLA-DOMINATED AREAS. APPARENTLY THE DRIVE FOR A PROFESSIONALIZED MILITIA WILL BE UNEVENLY CARRIED OUT, WITH CIVILIAN-RUN CITIES LIKE SHANGHAI AND PEKING LEADING THE WAY. TOP CADRE FROM BOTH CITIES, WANG HUNG-WEN AND POLITBURO ALTERNATE NI CHIH-FU, WERE PROMINENT AT PEKING CELEBRATIONS HONORING THE CHINESE ARMY'S 1950 ENTRY INTO THE KOREAN WAR (NCNA OCTOBER 26). NI GAVE THE SPEECH. THEIR APPEARANCE PUTS A NEW CAST ON THE ANNIVERSARY--LAST YEAR AN ALL-CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 HONG K 10903 310900Z

PLA AFFAIR. WHILE THIS NEW CAST WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH CURRENT PRC EFFORTS TO EMPHASIZE A POLITICAL RATHER THAN MILITARY APPROACH TO THE KOREAN PROBLEM, IT ALSO STRONGLY HINTS OF CONTINUED PRESSURE TO ASSERT CIVILIAN AUTHORITY OVER MILITARY AFFAIRS WITHIN CHINA.

9. LI TE-SHENG WAS ALSO AT THE ABOVE CELEBRATIONS. HIS PRESENCE ALONGSIDE NI, THE "CAPITAL WORKERS' MILITIA GENERAL DIRECTOR," COULD SIGNAL LI'S WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT A MILITIA RUN BY CIVILIANS IN CERTAIN AREAS, WHILE HIS ANHWEI CONFERENCE STAND SUGGESTS LI'S DETERMINATION TO PREVENT THE CAMPAIGN FOR A CIVILIAN-LED MILITIA FROM SPREADING THROUGHOUT CHINA. HE MAY NOW BE IN THE PIVOTAL POSITION IN PARTY-PLA RELATIONS.
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